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BRIAN PHIPPS, INL AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: ACTION REQUEST FOR PRE-BLAST TRAINING

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1502

¶1. ACTION REQUEST: Embassy Addis Ababa requests DS/ATA provide Ethiopia the following courses, to be conducted in Ethiopia, as soon as possible: Explosive Incident Countermeasures (EIC) and Advanced Explosive Incident Countermeasures (AEIC). The courses have been requested by the Ethiopian police and are necessary to build Ethiopian police capacity to address the rising threat to American citizens and interests in Ethiopia of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The Ethiopians have put DS/ATA post-blast training to use investigating a series of recent fatal IED incidents. END ACTION REQUEST.

IED Incidents Rising

¶2. Ethiopia is an important counterterrorism partner in a very dangerous neighborhood. Recently, Addis Ababa has experienced a noticeable uptick in fatal incidents involving IEDs in 2008, including the May 20 bombing of a minibus that killed an American citizen, the April 14 near simultaneous bombings of two gas stations and the February 29 bombing of a bank branch (reftel). Extremists justify attacks on the Ethiopian government and its citizens based on Ethiopia's military foray in Somalia, its counterinsurgency operations in the Ogaden and its tense border standoff with Eritrea. Al Qaeda and affiliated organizations have publicly stated that Ethiopia and U.S. interests in the Horn of Africa are viable targets.

An Attractive Target

¶3. Addis Ababa is an attractive target for terrorists because it is the diplomatic center for Africa, home of the African Union (AU) and more than 150 resident diplomatic missions and international organizations. It is also the United States' third largest mission, which hosts hundreds of AmCit TDYers, including uniformed military, each year. Scores of international conferences are regularly held in the city, including the AU Summit, and Embassy Addis Ababa facilitates the visit of a number of significant delegations, including, in the past year, the Secretary of State, the AFRICOM Commander and the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs.

Capacity Needed

¶4. The United States and Ethiopia share an interest in thwarting terrorist incidents in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, and the United States seeks to build the capacity of the Ethiopian police to respond quickly, efficiently and safely to IED incidents in order to best protect American lives and property. At present, the Ethiopians lack a bomb squad with the necessary capability to effectively grapple with IEDs. The EIC and AEIC courses can address their deficiencies and get them on track. At the highest levels,

the Ethiopian security services have asked our RSO shop to provide them DS/ATA's pre-blast training opportunities. Specifically, the Director General of the Ethiopian police is a close Embassy contact and has pressed the RSO for pre-blast/suspect device response training.

Positive Results

15. Over the years, the United States has conducted a number of counterterrorism-related trainings, but the Ethiopians have expressed a preference for "hard" subjects. The courses best received included: Preventing Attacks on Soft Targets, Security of Vital Facilities, Border Control Management and Post-Blast Investigation. The Ethiopian police enthusiastically received the DS/ATA Post-Blast training last year and have put what they learned to good use in investigating reftel bombings. If DS/ATA can make the EIC and AEIC courses available to Ethiopia, the Ethiopian police will undoubtedly put the training to good use in pursuit of our collective interests.

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